

A History of the Work of Redemption

By Jonathan Edwards

Lesson 26 - Period 3 - Part 8 - The Church in the Millenium (Postmillennialism)

“The work of redemption is a work that God carries on from the fall of man to the end of the world”

Edwards discussion now moves to his thoughts about the future millennial state of the church. The postmillennial view sees a glorious age to come for the church while it is on earth. Edwards sees this age as the coming of the _____ of _____ in fulness upon the earth.

“This is most properly the time of the kingdom of heaven upon earth...Though the kingdom of heaven was in a degree set up soon after Christ’s resurrection...yet this is the principal time of the kingdom of heaven on earth, the time principally intended by the prophecies of Daniel whence the Jews took the name of the kingdom of heaven.”

“Now is the principal fulfillment of all the prophecies of the Old Testament which speak of the glorious times of the gospel in the latter days. Though there has been a glorious fulfillment of those prophecies already, in the times of the apostles, and of Constantine; yet the expressions are too high to suit any other time entirely, but that which is to succeed the fall of Antichrist.”

Edwards now discusses 8 elements that will mark this glorious age of the church on earth.

- 1. The _____ of the Lord will increase-** *“It will be a time of great light and knowledge. The present, are days of darkness, in comparison of those days...There shall then be a wonderful unraveling of the difficulties of religion, and clearing up of seeming inconsistencies...So great shall be the increase of knowledge in this time, that heaven shall be as it were opened to the church of God on earth.”*
- 2. Personal _____ will greatly increase-** *“Now (during this future age) vital religion shall everywhere prevail and reign. Religion shall not be an empty profession, as it now mostly is, but holiness of heart and life shall abundantly prevail...Not that there will be none remaining in a Christless condition; but that visible wickedness shall be suppressed everywhere, and true holiness shall become general, though not universal.”*
- 3. Christians will be in places of _____ throughout the world-** *“The saints have hitherto for the most part been kept under, and wicked men have governed. But now they will be uppermost...In that day, such persons as are eminent for true piety and religion, shall be chiefly promoted to places of trust and authority.”*
- 4. _____ and _____ will be great on the earth-** *“There shall then be universal peace and a good understanding among the nations of the world, instead of confusion, wars, and bloodshed...Then shall malice, and envy, and wrath, and revenge, be suppressed everywhere; and peace and love shall prevail between one man and another...Then shall flourish in an eminent manner those Christian virtues of meekness, forgiveness, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, and brotherly-kindness, those excellent fruits of the Spirit. Men, in their temper and disposition, shall then be like the Lamb of God, and lovely Jesus. The body shall be conformed to the Head.”*
- 5. The church in the world will be _____ -** *“All the world shall then be as one church, one orderly, regular, beautiful society.”*

6. **The church will be _____ and beautiful-** *“The church of God shall then be beautiful and glorious...the church will then be the greatest image of heaven itself.”*
7. **The earth will experience a period of great _____ -** *“Such a spiritual state as we have just described has a natural tendency to health and long life; and that will actually be the case...the days of Solomon were but an image of those days, as to the temporal prosperity which shall be obtained in them.”*
8. **It will be a time of great _____ -** *“The Scriptures everywhere represent this prosperity to be of long continuance...It will be a time of great rejoicing.”*

In this postmillennial understanding of the future this glorious time of the church does _____ last forever.

“A little before the end of the world, a great part of the world shall fall away from Christ and His church...apostacy will be very general. The nations of the four quarters of the earth shall be deceived; and the number of those who shall now turn enemies to Christ shall be vastly great.”

“Thus after a happy and glorious season, such a long day of light and holiness, of love and peace, and joy, it shall again be a dark time. Satan shall begin to set up his dominion again in the world; and this world shall again become a scene of darkness and wickedness...And the church of Christ, instead of extending to the utmost bounds of the world, as it did before, shall be reduced to narrow limits.”

Not only will the church become very small on the earth as the forces of evil grow but also that great number which oppose Christ and His church will seek to _____ the church from the earth.

“Those apostates shall make a great opposition to the church of God. The church shall be threatened with a sudden and entire overthrow by them.”

The wickedness will become so great on the earth that the only thing that will stop it will be the coming great _____ of _____.

“Now the state of things will seem most remarkably to call for Christ’s immediate appearance to judgement. For then the world shall be filled with the most aggravated wickedness. For much the greater part of the world shall have become visibly wicked and open enemies to Christ, and their wickedness shall be dreadfully aggravated by their apostasy.”

“The wickedness of the world will remarkably call for Christ’s immediate appearing in flaming fire to take vengeance on them, because of the way in which they shall manifest their wickedness. This will be by scoffing and blaspheming Christ and His holy religion; and particularly, they will scoff at the notion of Christ’s coming to judgement, of which the church shall be in expectation.”

“They shall give themselves up to their lusts, or to eat and drink, and wallow in sensual delights, as though they were to be here forever. They shall despise the warnings the church shall give them of the coming of Christ to judgement, as the people of the old world despised what Noah told them of the approaching flood, and as the people of Sodom did when Lot said to them, ‘The Lord will destroy the city’.”

“The work of conversion which has been carried on from the beginning of the church after the fall through all those ages, shall be carried on no more. There never shall be another soul converted. Every one of those many millions, whose names were written in the book of life before the foundation of the world, shall be brought in; not one soul shall be lost.”